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Isaacs

America's fight for liberty
and justice

New York

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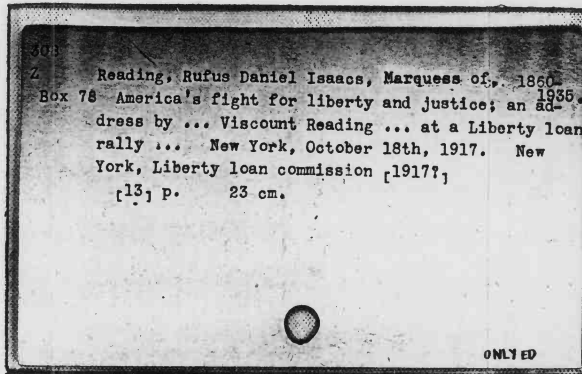
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Gift of the Librarian

America's Fight for Liberty and Justice



*An address by the Right Honorable,
The Viscount Reading, G. C. B.,
K. C. V. O. Lord Chief Justice of
England, delivered at a Liberty
Loan Rally, Carnegie Hall,
New York, October 18th, 1917.*

Reading, Rufus Daniel Seagrass, 1860-1860-1860-

Issued by
Liberty Loan Committee,
120 Broadway, New York.

80 April 1920 S.W.

THIS speech of Earl Reading, then Viscount Reading, who comes to this country as High Commissioner and British Ambassador, sets forth briefly and clearly his conception of the issues involved in the war, of the significance of America's entry into the conflict, and of the compelling reasons for the financial support of their Government by all Americans. The address was delivered in Carnegie Hall on October 18, 1917, during the Second Liberty Loan Campaign. Owing to the great pressure of events at the time, and the rush of news matter on the subject of the loan, the publication of the speech in pamphlet form was deferred.

Because of Lord Reading's selection as High Commissioner to the United States, the highest post ever held by a diplomatic envoy to this country, it is believed that the speech will be of special interest to Americans at this time. It gives a picture of the character and point of view of the man who will henceforth hold here an office of the first importance to both nations.

A study of this speech at this time is suggested to editors, with a view to making editorial comment on war finance. Any such editorial will be valuable in calling attention to the coming Third Liberty Loan, and bringing out more emphatically the necessity of money to carry on the war.

America's Fight for Liberty and Justice

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I esteem it one of the highest honors ever paid to me that I should have been invited by the Liberty Loan Committee to address you tonight upon so important an occasion in your history. I thank you most sincerely for the reception which you have been good enough to give, not to me personally, but to the office which I hold, and above all to the country of which I am a citizen.

Common Struggle for Liberty and Justice

As I listened to your Chairman's noble utterance to you this evening, once again did my mind dwell upon the immense importance to us—the Allies—of the entry of America into the war. It is not only that you have vast resources of men, material and money, with which to assist the cause; it is not only that you stand with us until the victory has been achieved; it is in the main because America's entry into the war has demonstrated to the whole civilized world that our cause is just and that our aim is righteous. As has been so well said, the United States has not joined in the war for gain of territory nor for aggression. The United States can enter a war only in defense of justice and liberty.

You are governed by the will of your people. The foundations of your government are justice and liberty, and as Dr. Butler reminded you so truly tonight—and may I be forgiven if I repeat, however inadequately, some of the sentiments which he expressed in this connection—those very ideas and traditions and that very love which you have for justice and for freedom are inherited by you with us from common ancestors.

In England was fought the great fight for the freedom of the people. Throughout centuries the struggle continued, until the principles crystallized into law, recognized as the Common Law of England, which is only a comprehensive expression for de-

scribing the customary law which is to be obeyed according to the will of the people. You, when you framed laws of your own, adopted the Common Law of England, changing it, adapting it as in your wisdom you thought fit according to your more modern requirements. But, nevertheless, the foundation, the root, of your system of laws and of government and of ours remains the same. It is government by will of the people of the country; it is Constitutional Government.

At this point I may perhaps hazard the only personal observation that I would venture this evening, that this reflection may be some explanation why I, notwithstanding my position, am now here, and why I have been privileged to take part according to my country's wish in the conduct of the war. You have acted with great deliberation. And may I say with respect: All honor to the country that makes sure of its ground before it enters a war. You watched events, you heard the statements, you investigated them, you arraigned the parties, you listened to the evidence, and you gave your verdict. And it remained only for the supreme magistrate of this great country to pronounce judgment in accordance with your verdict.

Reviews of the War's Openings

I shall not weary you with a recapitulation of the evidence before you at the time when you gave that verdict; but just one brief retrospect. You will remember the end of July, 1914, when suddenly, no larger than a man's hand, there appeared a dark, ominous storm cloud, and nations which had learned to fear war grew alarmed. They could not believe that any nation would start a great conflict which must convulse Europe, unless there was real provocation; and of such provocation to Germany there was no trace whatever. In face of this danger there arose amongst the nations of Europe a desire for some conference which would prevent the threatened conflagration; something which would take the place of the sword, and by the light of reason and justice settle any dispute. But no; like a bolt from the blue came the savage onslaught on Belgium—Belgium, the quiet, industrious, peace-loving country that had no quarrel

with any other country and sought only to live in amity and goodwill with all the nations of Europe and America. Suddenly came this cynical breach of honor—the refusal by Germany to pay regard to its own plighted word. And then followed quickly, and so well known to you that I need not dwell upon them, those horrible crimes, of which the details shocked every civilized nation and made us realize that warfare as conducted by Germany was war against all law, against all justice, against all the dictates of humanity; and that callous, brutal conduct was the deliberate policy of the German government, organized and calculated to terrorize small nations like Belgium from opposing the march of the German hordes on their way to the domination of the world.

Sufferings of Belgium and France

And Belgium suffered all this at the hands of whom? Her women outraged and deported, her defenseless old men and little children killed and maimed, she asked herself in wonder, by whom? By the very nation that had solemnly pledged its honor in a written record to protect her against such aggression. And then, Great Britain found herself faced with the problem of whether she could remain still and be a mere spectator of such wanton aggression. To her honor her answer was swift and unhesitating. To assist Belgium in her defense and to help France against invasion and aggression, she threw into the struggle all she possessed from the very moment that she declared war, determined that come what might, whatever sacrifices she might have to make, she would never sheath the sword until Germany had realized her wrong and was prepared to make reparation.

As I speak, I think of the glorious and heroic fortitude of France throughout this time of trouble. With some of the richest parts of her territory invaded; with horrors untold heaped upon her; with her manhood in the trenches, even to the aged; with her womanhood in the hospitals or tilling the fields to provide food; with every inhabitant of her soil determined

to stand by her to the end, whatever the trial, stern and resolute has been her attitude. France may die; but she is determined she will never surrender. But France may take comfort. She will not die; neither will she surrender. France will win.

I wonder sometimes whether it is possible to present to you the picture of that part of France which is now invaded and occupied by the Germans—a less extent of her territory than it was, I agree; but still far too great a portion. That smiling land of Picardy, one of the richest and most fertile districts of France, is now a ruined, devastated and desolate area. If I may, I will relate to you one incident which may bring home to you the state of that once smiling land. When I went to the Somme to visit the French and British fronts I was taken to visit certain villages near the front line. There remained nothing but pulverized brick and stone, empty cartridge cases and rubbish of all kinds. At one place I was asked whether I could find the church? I looked around. Amidst the general ruin there was no church to be seen. Then the place where it had stood was pointed out to me, recognizable only by a crumbled mass of white fragments and dust amongst the debris. The church had been the only edifice built of white stone in the village. And all this ruin—repeated, alas! in so many places—was caused by the aggression of the Germans, by their dreams of military autocracy and a world hegemony, by their sinister project that by the sword France should be brought under their dominion. What was to follow after France, and presumably Great Britain, should have been swallowed up, I leave you to fill in according to your own imagination and views of the situation.

America United against Militarism

Sometimes, when I read your newspapers and see it stated that your huge foreign population, numbering so many millions, is with America in this struggle, I ask myself, "Why is it that these foreigners should make common cause with America?"

It is because the rattling of the sabre and the roar of cannon have originally caused many of these men with their families to come to this peaceful haven, where justice will be administered and where, provided that they are law-abiding citizens, they can be free to pursue their avocations without fear or interference. The thought must recently have come to them, "What would happen if perchance this sabre-rattling country were to gain the mastery in Europe? How long would it be before the Huns made an attack upon this continent; and where, then, would be the peaceful havens, the homes, and cottages we have built for ourselves? And what would become of our wives, and the children whom we have brought up in this land of liberty?" The answer is one which needs no words from me. It is, I believe—although as a stranger amongst you I may be presumptuous in venturing an opinion—because in their hearts these foreigners realize so well the benefits they have enjoyed from your constitution that they love it and the country in which they now live, and are prepared to pour out their blood in defense of the ideals which are the very foundation of the freedom which they have enjoyed.

Achievements of the Entente Allies

I pause now to speak of the great deeds of our other Allies; of the Russians who have emerged from an autocracy to a full liberty which they have not yet perhaps learned how necessary it is to control. But patience and generosity are due to Russia, and I venture to predict that she will still play her part, as I devoutly hope she will, in bringing this great conflict to a victorious end. Italy, an Ally with us because she saw that the struggle was for freedom, has managed to demonstrate that no mountains are impassable; that granted brave troops, and above all, skillful generals, precipices can be scaled, and the summits of mountains reached even by artillery. Of Serbia, of Roumania, let me add that they stand very much in the position of Belgium, and, as your Chairman has told you, they, as well as Belgium, have served as charnel houses of the German military autocracy.

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All these deeds, all these happenings, have transformed the army of my country, of which I know most, into a great continental army. We have had to build up a huge force and our "contemptible little army" has grown to one of five millions. Its deeds are known to you. In France and in Flanders it is fighting under the generalship of a great commander, and elsewhere in various theatres of war it is upholding the banner of Liberty. It is teaching the Germans that men whose initiative has been fostered by freedom, are better than men who have been trained to act as mere automata and whose individuality has been crushed by the machine destined to challenge the world. I should not wish it to be thought that I am in the slightest degree minimizing the advantages of discipline. It is indeed necessary as it is in every man's life, if he wishes to be a God-fearing and honorable citizen, and it is absolutely essential in an army. But Germany has managed, under the system of militarism pervading every department of her national life—a system which she has initiated and under which she is governed—to sap the nation's sense of justice and freedom. I believe, although I am hazarding only my own opinion, that it is largely by that spirit of freedom controlled by discipline which exists amongst our own people that the ascendancy of the British soldiers over the German has been won—with, of course, the assistance of all the resources of science without which it is impossible to make war at the present day.

Victory Impossible without Money

As I am addressing you, I think of the moral as affecting those who are asked to subscribe to a loan. In all this great organization for war, in the assembling of the products of the world for the purpose of gaining a victory over the enemy, money must always be the moving spirit. Money is necessary to pay both for labor and for raw material, and without abundance of it, no government can wage an effective war. If you have faith in yourselves, as I believe you have; if you put your

trust in your President and his Administration, as I believe you do; then pour out your money to help the Administration shorten the struggle. The greater the assistance you give and the sooner you give it, the better the chance of an early finish; the longer you delay with your subscriptions and contributions, the longer will be the war, and the greater the danger and the heavier the toll amongst those whom you love best who are fighting for you and your country's cause.

We Englishmen marvel, Mr. Chairman, at the achievement of the United States Administration in the short time you have been at war, and have come to the conclusion that it is indeed wonderful. We have been at war over three years; we had many lessons to learn, and we made many mistakes. I will not say that I do not think that America will make mistakes; if I did I should be guilty of flattery which in my judgment would be the poorest compliment possible to your intelligence. Of course, you will make mistakes. No country that ever achieves great things can avoid doing so. The use of mistakes is to learn to avoid repeating them, and to find the remedy as quickly as possible. Entering into the war when you did, you have thrown yourselves into it with your whole heart and soul. Your Congress, which represents your people, has passed laws granting powers to the Administration which enable them to carry on the struggle unfettered and untrammelled. Congress has passed laws granting supplies and authorizations of finance so stupendous as almost to stagger us, notwithstanding that we have become accustomed to sums of hundreds of millions, even of thousands of millions.

The Liberty Loan—An Answer to Germany

And yet I am here with other speakers pleading with you to support the second Liberty Loan. I am pleading with you, and proud and privileged to be here to add my small testimony to that of the distinguished men on the platform, to add my prayer to you to do all you can, to subscribe every dollar you can find to the loan, because this loan and your subscription to

it must be one of your answers to Germany's derision of America's action.

Think what it means. The sacrifice is so willingly made by your men to proceed to France, to carry, as they assuredly will, your banner to victory. Sacrifices would be made without hesitation by any who knew France as she was and saw her now. Indeed, no war can be won without great sacrifices; and we know something of them in my country, although our trials are not so great as those of France and Belgium, nor of Russia. Nevertheless, my country, which is not so rich as yours—particularly, may I say, after a long period of war—and is a smaller country than yours, managed in the early part of this year, after she had been two and a half years at war, to issue a loan which was subscribed to the extent of over one thousand millions sterling, or more than five billions of dollars. In a population numbering altogether some forty-six millions there were five million two hundred and eighty-nine thousand subscribers to that loan. If you count the population in Great Britain, the persons who contributed sums of a shilling and upwards, doing their best—all honor to them, though small was their contribution—the number of subscribers would be eight millions out of a population of forty-six millions.

Our Remoteness from the Theatre of War

And you, who have just entered into the war, are, according to the newspapers, not subscribing as fully as was expected to this loan. I put to myself the question, Why is it, if it be so? And I answer, first, that I have no manner of doubt that you will subscribe the whole of it.* Secondly, that if contribution does halt it is only because your imagination is not equal to picturing to yourselves all that your subscriptions would mean. You are three thousand miles away from the guns; you do not know what it is to have your coast bombarded; you have no Zeppelin raids nor aeroplane raids by which defenseless men, women and children are killed in the streets, in their beds, or wherever they may be. You have not suffered the destruction

* The amount offered for subscription in the Second Liberty Loan was \$3,000,000,000. The total subscription was \$4,617,532,300—a 54% over-subscription. The amount offered in the First Liberty Loan was \$2,000,000,000. The total subscription was \$3,656,226,850, a 52% over-subscription.

of many ships, the loss of brave and gallant sailors, nor the exposure and death of men and women whose sole offense was peaceably to sail the seas. You see no trainloads of wounded arriving after the great fights; you see no wounded being taken through the streets; you do not in your own homes hear the thunder of the guns, to remind you, if you have ever for a second forgotten it, that all that you love are "over there," exposed to their shattering effect.

If you could only picture the facts to yourselves, as I believe you will, as indeed you must, there will never be the need of another meeting to call upon you to subscribe. Subscribe what?—money. What is money in this struggle? What does it mean, as compared with the rest? If you here are fortunate enough, as you are, to be yourselves protected from these dangers, then I pray you, pour out your help, and give your assistance to those who are in the fighting line. Think of them as you subscribe and remember that every bond subscribed is equivalent to some protection for a friend. Every dollar that you may put into this loan may help to save one whom you love. Every shell this loan produces will bring victory nearer.

Permanent Peace the Goal

You are fighting for a glorious cause; you are fighting for a war to end war. Paradoxical as it may seem, you are fighting a war to secure peace, a durable peace for your children and your children's children. Peace is not yet close; let no man think that it is in sight. If peace comes earlier than expected, it is all to the good; but we must never relax precautions, for it is part of the enemy's cunning to strive to make it appear that peace is drawing near.

Preparations must be continued as if the war will last for yet a long time—pray that it may not! When peace comes, it must be our peace, not the peace of Germany. When peace comes, it must be a peace based upon justice and liberty. When peace comes, it must be a peace to call forth one united cry, which will resound throughout the whole universe: "Hallelujah! The world has been won for liberty."

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